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THE
DORSETSHIRE
GARLAND,

OR, THE
BEGGAR'S WEDDING.

IN THREE PARTS.



TEWKESBURY:

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T H E
DORSETSHIRE GARLAND,

O R, T H E
BEGGAR'S WEDDING.



P A R T I.

ALL you that delight in a jest that is true,
Give ear to these lines I unfold to you,
I'm sure you will smile when the same you hear,
This frolic was acted in fair Dorsetshire.

How a noble knight of renown lived there,
Who had a daughter of beauty most clear;
Hard by liv'd a merchant who had riches store,
Who had but one son, whom he did much adore.

This knight and merchant being neighbours near,
In friendship they liv'd, and lov'd each other dear,
Now they had agreed, these infants so dear,
Should be man and wife when come to riper years.

The merchant fell sick, and the lady likewise,
They sent for the knight with tears in their eyes,
Saying, from the world we soon must part,
And leave our baby the joy of our heart.

I hope if we leave our dear child to your care,
 With all our estate and worldly affair,
 You'll take care of him when were laid in the grave,
 Nay furthermore grant us the thing that we crave.

That you do not break your promise to me,
 But give your fair daughter his bride to be,
 But if he should die 'ere to age he doth come,
 Then all that I leave him is to be your own.

To the church of England I'd have him brought,
 And to serve his maker let him be taught ;
 That we may meet together in heaven above.
 Dear sir, said the knight, for the friendship and love

That has pass'd betwixt us, I'll take special care,
 How I do bring up your young son and heir,
 Now if that the Lord so long gives me life,
 My daughter shall be your son's sweet wife,

So then for the babies they sent for with speed,
 And the merchant said, Now my heart does bleed,
 For to leave them behind, but it must be done,
 Death calls me hence, and my glass is run.

His will being made, I'm content he did say,
 And kissed the babes with lips cold as clay,
 So both in one moment did yield up their breath,
 The happiest couple that lived on earth.

The merchant and his wife both laid in one grave,
 He takes home the child and kept most brave ;
 So the knight's daughter and the merchant's son,
 Became the public talk all over the town.

These children loved each other so dear,
 As this covetous knight began for to fear,
 His promise he now accounts but a jest,
 How he must perform which disturbed his rest

My daughter said he is a beauty most bright,
 She will be more fit for a lord or a knight,
 But ten thousand pounds is left to the boy,
 I must find out means his life to destroy.



P A R T II.

HE hired a beggar the child to kill,
 So the innocent babe thinking no ill,
 As they both at sport were busy at play,
 The treacherous knight with a false laugh did say,
 Come, Jemmy, will you go and take the air?
 And I! worthy sir, said the daughter so fair,
 For to gather daizies with Jemmy will go,
 But her father answer'd, It must not be so.

You must stay at home till he comes back again:
 So this innocent child like a lamb to be slain,
 Did go with the beggar many a long mile,
 Who at length to him did speak with a smile:

Pray where are you going, sir, tell unto me,
 Must I go no more pretty Susan to see?
 For his innocent talk made the beggar relent,
 So home to his wife with the child away went,

And told her the story, the woman then said,
 Lo! he's a fine creature and a well-favour'd babe,
 So a-begging with us I pray let him go,
 We'll call him our son, let us order it so.

But five years of age was this merchant's son,
 Yet he for the loss of his Susan did mourn.
 So the beggarman's wife to her husband did say,
 Come let us contrive to steal Susan away.

It is but justice to cheat the cruel man,
That wants this innocent for to trapan;
So the beggar to Dorset then instantly went,
For to steal young Susan was resolute bent.

He brought her ten miles till they came to a town
And stript off her cloaths as she mightn't be known,
And over a hedge he threw them indeed,
And homewards at night did hasten with speed.

In two or three hours he arriv'd at his cell,
Where a noble legion of beggars did dwell,
Where now I must leave those beggars so young,
And return to the knight who did bitterly mourn.

An hue and cry he sends to every town,
For finding his daughter there's five hundred pound,
They brought him the cloaths as found in the field,
Which made him believe his daughter was kill'd.

Now, heavens! he said, I see in is just,
This innocent babe whom I had in trust,
His blood cries for vengeance, I have my desert,
I have lost my daughter, the joy of my heart.

So now let us leave this base traitor to mourn,
Who wander'd about like one that's forlorn;
And turn to young Jemmy and Susan also,
Who along with the rest now a-mumping did go.

Now the beggar them for his children did own,
And most dutiful children that ever was known,
Which pleas'd him so well, to Doll he did say,
The money that was gave me this babe for to slay,

Shall be for his portion, and twice as much more.
And since that each other they do so adore,
If they do live to the age of eighteen,
We'll have the best wedding that ever was seen.

For Jemmy and Susan in marriage shall join,
Do not me controul for this frolic of mine,
A score of bold suitors I swear shall be there,
We will keep this wedding in fair Dorsetshire.

We will give it out upon such a day,
A brave beggar's wedding there is to be,
The gentry will be eager to see such a sight,
And if he is living that base perjur'd knight.

When that this wedding is done and all o'er,
I'll take this young couple unto their own door,
And make him a present of his daughter fair,
And take to him Jemmy his son and heir.

Old Doll she was pleas'd to hear him say so,
So merrily out they a-cruising did go.
For thirteen long years they at this rate did run,
At length the fix'd time for the wedding was come.



P A R T III.

THE richest attire that ever was bought,
With silver and gold it was richly wrought,
For the bridegroom and bride they then did prepare
And so took their journey into Dorsetshire.

A score of the best that belong'd to the tribe,
They took along with them to credit the bride,
The lame with their crutches, the halt and the blind
Were plac'd in great order to follow behind.

And having been two or three days in the town,
The fame of this wedding it spread up and down,
The rich and the poor were all curious to see,
And many resolv'd the bride's guest to be.

They hired the noblest hall in the town,
That rich and the poor might together sit down.
But Jemmy and Susan were both kept secure,
'Till they in their splendor appear'd at the door.

Some hundreds of people stood by for to gaze,
At the sight of the couple were struck in amaze,
For she did appear like an angel divine,
And he did the rest of his sex far outshine.

Old Doll and her husband did follow the bride,
With a budget of good bread and cheese by her side,
And after came hoping the blind and the lame,
Such a wedding in England was ne'er before seen,

This couple were not ashamed of their guest,
Because they did nothing know of their birth,
But joined in marriage, they back did return,
And now for the pastime they had, sir, at home.

They furnish'd the table with good wedding cheer
They mump'd on the road to fair Dorchester,
Good rhine of fat bacon, and old musty cheese,
And noggins of ale as much as you please.

Dinner being over, starts up one of the guest,
And pull'd out his bagpipes, and play'd up the best,
The lame and the blind went to dancing the hay,
And the gentry flock'd as they would to a play.

Amongst the rest came this treacherous knight,
Fixing his eyes on his daughter so bright,
His heart did flutter and throb in his breast,
His spirits were seiz'd and his mind was oppress'd.

Old Doll cry'd, we must have a jig of the bride,
Come, play up a merry hornpipe she cry'd,
Which Susan perform'd with so much grace,
That she won the praise of every one in the place.

Nay come, said the old man, 'tis a child of my own
Come, jovial piper, strike up t'other tune ;
A health to the bridegroom let pass round the room,
Tho a beggar brought up he's a merchant's son born.

The knight hearing this stept up to the bride,
Let me speak to you, fair creature. he cry'd,
If you have the mark of a rose on your breast,
Then you are my daughter I vow and protest.

She shew'd him the mark, he immediately cry'd,
Take home the bridegroom and the sweet bride,
For this is my joy that's been missing so long,
And her dear joy the merchant's young son.

Bring the guests with you unto my home,
I'll kindly receive you, and when I have done,
I'll inform the world of my treacherous deed,
Who can deny what the heavens decreed ?

The cripples snatch'd up their crutches and run,
To see what great miracles there had been done,
Her father confess'd the whole matter that night,
All praised the beggar that sav'd the babe's life.

All people upbraided him for his base crime,
With grief he dy'd within a short time,
And left this young couple six thousand a year,
Who are stiled the beggars of fair Dorsetshire.

Old Doll and her husband in splendor did dwell
This couple they loved them very well,
You misers that are of a covetous mind,
Strive not to prevent what the powers design'd.